2020W1 UBC Individual Instructor Report for POLI 423E 001/POLI 516D 001(POLI 516D 001 - Issues in Comparative Politics) (Yang-Yang Zhou)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Project Title: **2020W1 UBC Instructor Evaluations**

Course Audience: **18**
Responses Received: **18**
Response Ratio: **100%**

Report Comments

This course took place during a period of significant disruption to normal university operations, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommended Minimum Response Rates

Class Size	Recommended Minimum Response Rates based on 80% confidence & ± 10% margin
< 10	75%
11 - 19	65%
20 - 34	55%
35 - 49	40%
50 - 74	35%
75 - 99	25%
100 - 149	20%
150 - 299	15%
300 - 499	10%
> 500	5%

Creation Date: **Saturday, January 30, 2021**

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University Module Questions

University Module Questions

Question	N	n	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	IM	DI
The instructor made it clear what students were expected to learn.	18	18	0	0	1	6	11	0	4.68	0.29
The instructor communicated the subject matter effectively.	18	18	0	0	1	10	7	0	4.30	0.29
The instructor helped inspire interest in learning the subject matter.	18	17	0	0	2	8	7	0	4.31	0.35
Overall, evaluation of student learning (through exams, essays, presentations, etc.) was fair.	18	18	0	1	1	8	8	0	4.38	0.40
The instructor showed concern for student learning.	18	18	0	0	1	9	8	0	4.39	0.30
Overall, the instructor was an effective teacher.	18	18	0	0	2	7	9	0	4.50	0.35

Question	%Favourable
The instructor made it clear what students were expected to learn.	94.44%
The instructor communicated the subject matter effectively.	94.44%
The instructor helped inspire interest in learning the subject matter.	88.24%
Overall, evaluation of student learning (through exams, essays, presentations, etc.) was fair.	88.89%
The instructor showed concern for student learning.	94.44%
Overall, the instructor was an effective teacher.	88.89%

Faculty Questions

Considering everything, how would you rate this course?

N	n	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good	IM	DI
18	18	0	0	2	11	5	4.14	0.30

	%Favourable
	88.89%

Instructor Questions

Question	N	n	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	IM	DI
In classes where the size of the class and content of the course were appropriate, student participation in class was encouraged by the instructor.	18	18	0	0	1	5	12	0	4.75	0.27
High standards of achievement were set.	18	18	0	0	0	11	7	0	4.32	0.24
The instructor was generally well prepared for class.	18	18	0	0	0	5	13	0	4.81	0.20
The instructor was readily available to students outside of class (e.g., through email, office hours, or by appointment).	18	18	0	0	0	5	13	0	4.81	0.20
The instructor treated students with respect.	18	18	0	0	0	4	14	0	4.86	0.17

Question	%Favourable
In classes where the size of the class and content of the course were appropriate, student participation in class was encouraged by the instructor.	94.44%
High standards of achievement were set.	100.00%
The instructor was generally well prepared for class.	100.00%
The instructor was readily available to students outside of class (e.g., through email, office hours, or by appointment).	100.00%
The instructor treated students with respect.	100.00%

Open ended feedback

Please comment on any aspects, positive or negative, of your instructor's teaching, attitudes to students, class atmosphere, or any other matters affecting the quality of instruction that you consider worthy of note.

Comments
I am incredibly grateful for how much time and dedication Dr. Zhou put into the development of this course, especially given the transition to remote learning and the challenges with having online seminars. I especially appreciate how she was very encouraging and not only took the time to encourage all of our divergent research interests, but to also create opportunities for us to see a wide range of research methodologies and designs that we could take outside of the course. Most of all, Dr. Zhou took on a significant workload not only within the course, such as by facilitating our discussions and providing us with ample feedback on our coursework, but also was very considerate of providing us with information and knowledge that would extend towards our broader careers and endeavours beyond the seminar in itself. I was also very grateful for how Dr. Zhou allotted time for guest speakers and to also consider alternative academic paths, specifically in order to help us prepare for the current conditions of academia and bring to our attention career options outside of the institution. Ultimately, I found the course itself to not only challenge my own comfort with certain research designs or methodologies, but also in terms of thinking about paths and options beyond academia in itself.
Overall I really enjoyed this course. Prof. Zhou was very accommodating to students given the unprecedented situation. The only drawback however, was in terms of presentations done by students, I think some students were allowed to go over time while others were a bit rushed.
I think our instructor motives us for fruitful discussions. She was always prepared about the week's topic and gave background information before moving to class discussions. She is always approachable after and outside of the class.
Prof. Zhou shows great passion for her teaching, she is always available via appointments or emails. She is willing to reach out to her students outside of the classroom and wants her students to succeed by offering sufficient sources for materials and inviting guest speakers. She also shows great respect for her students.
Professor Zhou is an extremely effective communicator and instructor. Her insights on particular subject matters, and the way course readings were designed generated a fresh environment for studying development politics. She is extremely knowledgeable about literature and work performed in her area of studies and she inspired me to continue along the lines of development studies. Additionally, she is also very caring and understanding when it comes to her students.
Dr. Zhou was extremely respectful and supportive of students and clear in their expectations. She provided prompt responses to questions and is clearly passionate about the discipline. Overall, Dr. Zhou provided a welcoming environment over Zoom. I also appreciated how receptive Dr. Zhou was to student suggestions.
Yang–Yang was very clear in her expectations and is a highly effective communicator. I appreciated the variety in the readings in the course outline. My only constructive feedback would be to have less student talking and more context given by the instructor on each reading (especially on quantitative methods since some students have little background on this). Sometimes too much student contribution with limited instructor feedback on their points felt confusing. I didn't know if I was on–track/getting the essential points out of the discussion. That being said, Yang–Yang is an extremely competent, fair and positive professor. We were very lucky to have her, especially during the COVID online circumstance. She genuinely wants to see her students succeed and break barriers in academia. She is there for her students 100% and is clearly passionate about the course topic. Thank you Yang–Yang!
I loved the class and its atmosphere. I learned a lot from the class and professor Zhou. She always replied to my questions and made time to meet me to help me with my research. It's the first time for me to undertake a research of this scale so I really appreciate her help and the course.
Yang–yang is a passionate and talented educator, and inspires her students to love the course content. Her course was well–organized and interesting, and the quality of her class discussions was quite high. She is open to feedback and is available outside of class, and therefore is an excellent asset to the department. The only recommendation I have is that she marks quite hard, and her feedback is limited. While I do not dispute the marks she gives, her students would benefit from clearer feedback and expectations on how they can improve their work.
Yang–Yang encouraged participation throughout the semester and showed she really valued everyone's opinion equally. I learned a lot about different research designs and what researchers do to find tangible results in their studies. I also greatly appreciated the diversity of topics in this course and I can definitely tell Yang–Yang made a concerted effort to include as many different voices in the syllabus.
The classroom environment is really respectful and the instructor helped facilitate constructive and supportive conversations. Overall, the quality of the instruction is very good.
Very respectful class atmosphere; participation was always encouraged; great & divers selection of readings. I definitely appreciate the efforts to include readings from authors of different background!!

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Comments
Dr. Zhou is very personable, respectful, and knowledgeable. She did a good job diversifying the syllabus, exemplifying how development is more than just foreign aid. Some topics such as geography and natural resources, the impact of field experiments, and information campaigns were areas I had not previously discussed or researched.
Dr. Zhou was very responsive, flexible, and understanding. She listened to our concerns in terms of how the course was structured, and agreed to make appropriate amendments.
Dr. Zhou is a very effective teacher and I liked how organized her classes were. I would like to specifically acknowledge and appreciate Dr. Zhou's effort to diversify the syllabus and make it very inclusive right both in including readings from different fields to including works of emerging scholars from the countries they were studying which I think was appreciated by the entire class. She was very respectful and helpful both in class and during her office hours. I would have liked if the classes had more of her explanation at the beginning, particularly of quantitative methods employed in the readings for that week that she is extremely knowledgable about but not all the students seem to be. Overall, Dr. Zhou made the online learning environment comfortable and interesting and I truly believe I am walking away with a lot more interest in this area of study than I initially had, with a lot of it owed to Dr. Zhou's enthusiasm about her subject.
The professor really knows the subject and she motivates students to improve their work/academic skills by setting high standards for them. It is really a privilege to be a part of a class taught by such a talented scholar. Also I really appreciate how the Professor had a careful consideration in diversifying authors (including women, authors from developing countries, etc.).
Yang Yang's great. She appears to be passionate about the subject matter of this course and student learning. The structure of the class, being seminar–like, put a lot of onus on student discussion and participation, which are important. That being said, i would have liked for her to teach a little more rather than have the class completely guided by discussions. She was also very flexible and understanding in terms of assignments and other participatory activities outside class time, which honestly came in handy toward the middle and end of the semester when our workload as grad students became more intense.

Please comment on any aspects, positive or negative, of the format and content of the course.

Comments
I especially appreciate how encouraging Dr. Zhou was on a personal level in relation to my own research, specifically by providing me with the opportunity to conduct a study on my own interest, but also in her willingness to meet with me outside seminars in her office hours. That Dr. Zhou was always enthusiastic about and also open to helping me think about my research questions and my choice of research method was incredibly affirming, and I was very thankful for how seriously she took my topic and my interests. Personally, I know that I will be taking much of the advice she has provided, especially on a personal level, outside of the course and in relation to my own interests and my own career decisions following my MA. Overall, I am very thankful for the opportunity to have been able to take this seminar, and learned immensely both from the lecture material in itself as well as Dr. Zhou's generosity in providing all of us with time out of her own personal schedule to help us on our topics.
I appreciated the course material and I think that Prof. Zhou did a good job of diversifying the syllabus. It would however, be good if maybe future iterations of this course could include some readings on the Caribbean region, as this region does not receive sufficient attention
I think the format is creative in the sense that every person should make two presentations. Thanks to presentations, students find an opportunity to internalize the topic online.
I love the topics discussed in this course, Prof. Zhou offers a wide range of aspects for us to discuss, after this course, I think I have developed an interest in comparative politics.
I really enjoyed how course readings were structured. I think the fact the instructor focused on recent readings really aided in students understanding of how the field currently works. I would say that my only criticism is how heavily the class depended on students to do 90% of the speaking. While this is an understandably effective and necessary element of a graduate seminar course, having some days where the professor dedicated a little extra time to lecturing on particular important concepts would have enriched the course even more.
The assignments of the course were all quite focused on quantitative research and research design. While this is interesting I would have liked to see more variety in assignments focusing on IPE. I would have also appreciated more feedback throughout the semester (ex. written feedback on project outline and feedback on reading summaries).Generally, the course was well balanced and the workload was not too heavy.
The course is good! It explores different aspects of development and even different perspectives/methodology when dealing with development.
Due to the global circumstances pushing us into a virtual environment, I feel I did not get the most out of this course, however; I think Prof. Yang Yang did very well in trying to make

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Comments
the course as engaging as it could be! I really struggled this semester due to the virtual environment and felt she did very well in being available and explaining concepts / connecting material.
One thing I wish we went more into depth was how to apply the many research designs we studied. For instance, how does one establish causality or conduct an experimental study. I also noticed, despite the many papers/journal articles we read about the African continent, only about 3 of the authors (Mahmood, Mkandawire, Habyarimana) were themselves from the continent. This was especially apparent in the gender bias week where despite most of the papers being about either the African continent or India, almost all the researchers were white women. So, I do wish we got to hear more from women researchers from those places. Other than that, I believe Yang–Yang did a fantastic job this semester!
Some of the readings' quantitative components could be very dense and confusing for students coming into the program with no prior quant–training. However, the instructor did provide good explanation of these concepts when needed.
I would have liked a lecture on research methods. This course places a high emphasis on original research and I am feeling a bit overwhelmed about the research paper. As an incoming MA student, I would have liked an introduction on how to use specific research designs for the purpose of our research paper.
While the topics were all beneficial to conceptualizing development, I do wish we focused more on measurement and causality. In this vein, I did not feel overly equipped for the assignments. The final paper seems like a mini–thesis, which is extremely nerve–racking for the first term when we have received no guidance on how to produce causal research. It would have been beneficial for the goals of the class to be closely linked to the expectation attached to the final paper; all expressed at the beginning of the course so we could have this in mind when completing the weekly readings. While we received feedback from our peers, in regards to our paper outlines, it would have been more beneficial to receive written feedback from Dr. Zhou. As previously stated, I did not feel overly equipped to complete the assignments. We also did not receive feedback or grades from our discussion leads after they were completed.
The content of the course was effectively organized and Dr. Zhou's efforts to create an inclusive syllabus were visible throughout.
Online class is very tiring and demands a lot from students, plus it can be very intimidating as things get recorded. Thus, I would say that the only thing I missed was a more fluid debate between students and students and the professor (e.g, more space for questions and doubts about class readings, comments that are not related to presenters` questions, etc.). I believe that this rigidity perhaps was due to the high volume of content covered each class or the fixed format of the discussion questions (i.e., discussion questions are previously prepared by class leads). Perhaps the debate section could be after all papers are presented and would cover broader topics related to the readings, so students would engage more and feel more at ease.

Explanatory Note

Percent Favourable Rating

This is the percentage of respondents who rated the instructor a 4 or 5 (Agree or Strongly Agree).

Interpolated Median

The data collected for Student Evaluations of Teaching (SEoT) are ordinal in nature, with a natural order (from 1 to 5). While the mean may be used as a measure of central tendency for such data, it is not an appropriate or accurate representation of SEoT data (cf. Stark & Freishtat, 2014). The usual measure of central tendency for ordinal data is the median. As a result, we have been reporting the mean and the median for the last several years. After considerable thought and data modeling, we now believe that the interpolated median is the best representation of the data, since it takes the frequency distribution into account.

Consider the following example from 2015W, the two classes have identical mean (3.8). However, the instructor in class 2 received 77% favourable (4-5) ratings, compared to 53% for the instructor in class 1. The Interpolated median values of (3.7 and 4.2), much better reflects the distribution of the scores above and below their respective median. Furthermore, the interpolated median is better correlated with percent favourable rating; such that an interpolated median of 3.5 on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, corresponds to 50% favourable rating.

Frequency Distribution

Response for UMI	Class 1	Class 2
5 = Strongly agree	5	5
4 = Agree	3	5
3 = Neither agree nor disagree	6	0
2 = Disagree	1	2
1 = Strongly disagree	0	1
Mean	3.8	3.8
Median	4.0	4.0

Interpolated Median	3.7	4.2
Percent favourable rating	53%	77%

Dispersion Index

The dispersion Index is a measure of variability suitable for ordinal data (Rampichini, Grilli & Petrucci 2004). This dispersion index has values between zero and 1. A zero dispersion index indicates that all students in the section gave the same rating to the instructor. An index value of 1.0 is obtained when the class splits evenly between the two extreme values (Strongly Disagree & Strongly Agree), a very rare occurrence. In SEoT data at UBC, the index rarely exceeds 0.85, and mostly for evaluations not meeting the minimum recommended response rate.